

**UNISON Virtual Higher Education Service Group
Conference**

Conference agenda and guide

22nd February 2022

Via Civica Online Platform

Welcome to the UNISON Virtual Higher Education Service Group Conference 2022



I am delighted to welcome you to UNISON's 2022 Virtual Higher Education Conference.

Due to the on-going COVID-19 crisis, the impact this is having on public services and the crucial role our members and activists are playing in tackling the crisis and also to protect our activist's health, safety, and wellbeing we are running Higher Education Conference on a virtual platform.

It is important our members and activists come together to discuss and debate some of the key issues facing staff working in higher education. I want to extend an especially warm welcome to all delegates for whom this is your first UNISON Conference. I hope this will be the first of many and that you feel able to participate in the debates, to have your say on what matters to you and your colleagues.

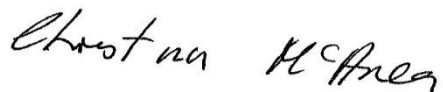
Universities rely on their support staff and the jobs they do – this has always been the case. However, the past two years have shown more acutely than ever before, how vital our university support staff are. In the past two years we have seen wardens, security staff, catering and cleaning staff keeping residences safe and clean during lockdowns and ensuring that students have been looked after and supported. We have seen IT staff setting up remote working and learning platforms and keeping those operational. We have seen library and technical staff coming onto campuses to support ongoing research and study. We have seen administrative staff picking up additional pastoral duties to support students remotely and pastoral care staff supporting colleagues and students through these difficult times. And there are many more examples of university staff going that extra mile to make a difference.

The higher education sector continues to face change and uncertainty. At the time of writing, universities in England are still waiting to find out when the government will announce its plans for the future of higher education funding. Whatever the plans are, we know they will have potential repercussions for universities across the UK. UNISON will continue to advocate for a properly funded, free education system that

is open and accessible to all. As the leading support staff union in higher education, we will continue to advocate for, and campaign for, decent pay, terms and conditions that recognises the dedication and work of our members.

We know that by organising together, standing strong and acting collectively we can, and do, win for our members. Over the past year UNISON has won disputes in higher education on health and safety, pensions, and redundancies. UNISON has campaigned on pay, against threats to our pension schemes, and for equality at work. We will continue, locally, regionally and nationally, to fight for equality, for workers' rights, for better pay, for a greener future and to protect jobs. Our universities are some of the very best in the world - you are the backbone of the sector and it couldn't function without you.

I wish you an enjoyable and productive Virtual Higher Education Conference 2022.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Christina McAnea'. The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name 'Christina' and the surname 'McAnea' clearly distinguishable.

Christina McAnea
General Secretary

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1 How to attend UNISON Virtual Higher Education Conference 2022

Delegate Information

Welcome to UNISON's Virtual Higher Education Conference.

The Virtual Higher Education Conference may look and feel very different to what we are used to, but the National Executive Council feels that it is important to give our members and activists a platform to discuss the issues the union faces and use our democratic processes to shape how we work in the future.

How to attend Virtual Conference

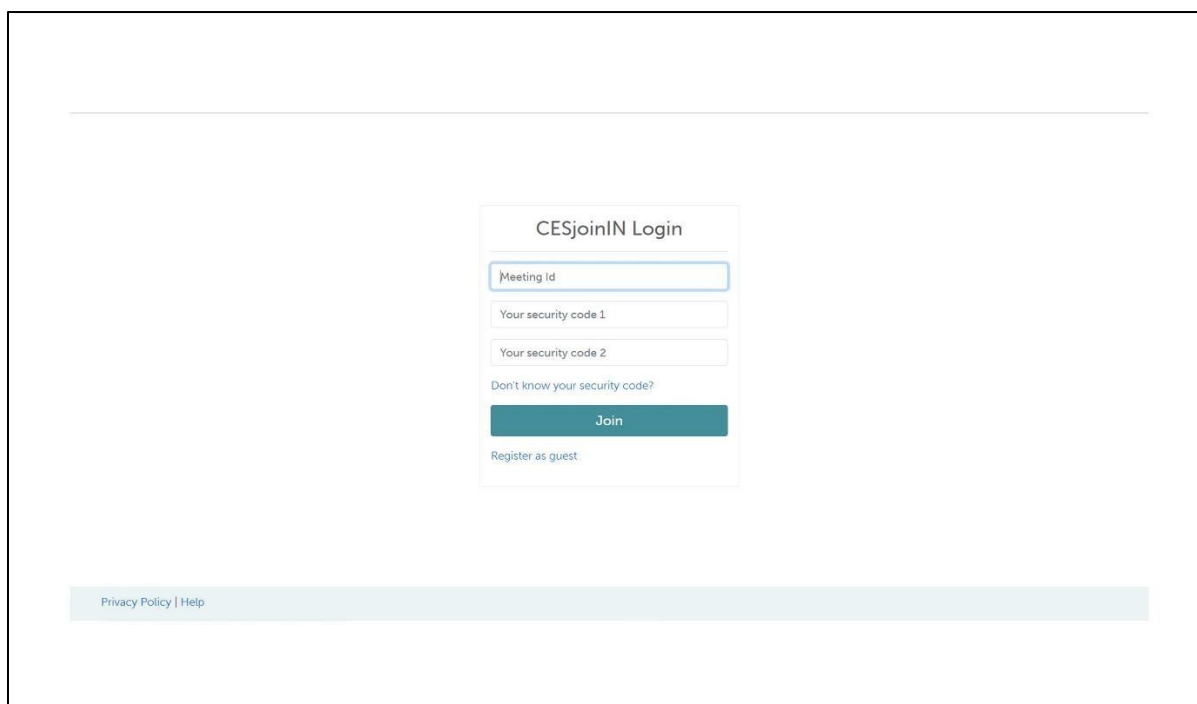
In order to fully experience the Virtual Higher Education Conference, you will need to have the following things in place:

- your meeting and access codes – these will be sent to you and you will need to login at the start of each session. **If you do not have these 48 hours before Conference starts, please contact the Conference Office via email conferences@unison.co.uk;**
- access to a PC, laptop, tablet, or mobile device with access to the internet – either by hard wire, Wi-Fi or mobile signal of at least 3mbs;
- the CESjoinIN site supports most common browsers including all recent versions of Chrome, Safari, Firefox and Edge. Internet Explorer has been superseded by Edge, so we do not recommend you use Internet Explorer as it is no longer supported. For the best viewing experience, please update to the latest version of your browser. The video stream is similar to viewing YouTube or iPlayer or other streaming services so if you can view those services then you should be able to view the event.
- A video walkthrough of the CESjoinIN is available [here](#).
- Any other reasonable adjustment you personally require to use the device.

Sign in Page

Please follow the link to the CESjoinIN Login in page - <https://attend.cesjoinin.com/>

You should see the following screen:



CESjoinIN Login

Meeting Id

Your security code 1

Your security code 2

[Don't know your security code?](#)

[Join](#)

[Register as guest](#)

[Privacy Policy](#) | [Help](#)

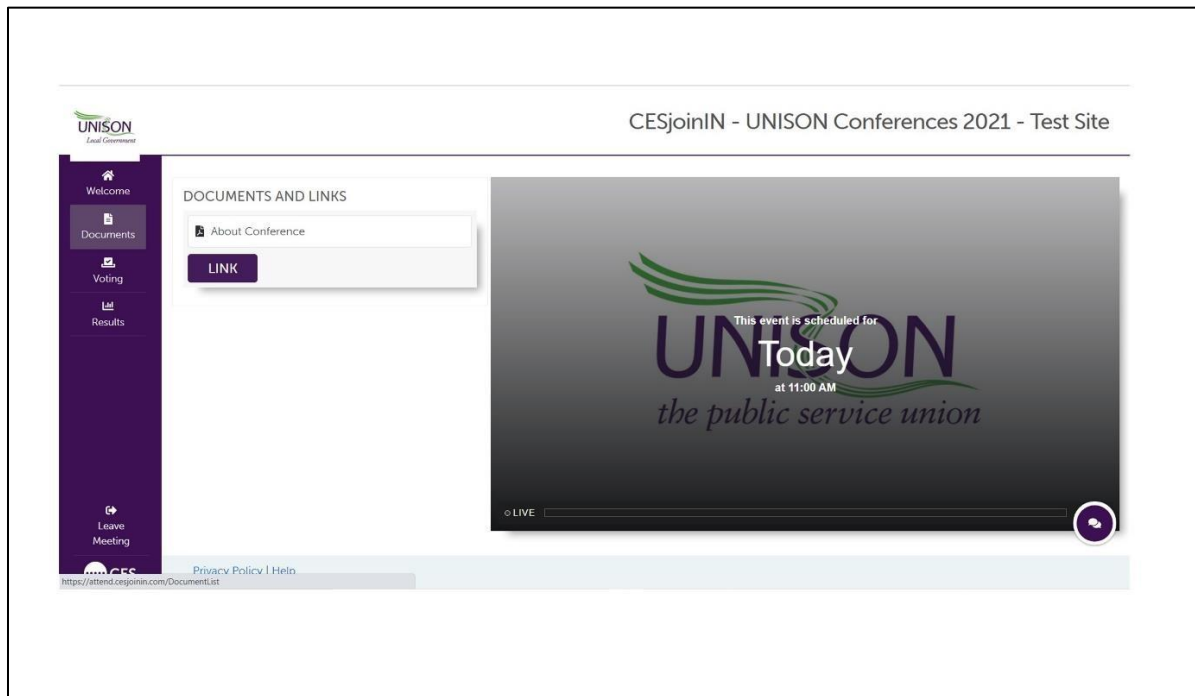
Enter your meeting ID and your two security codes (keep these safe and confidential as you will need them to log-in to each session of Conference). This will take you to the welcome page, which should look a bit like the example below:

Welcome Page



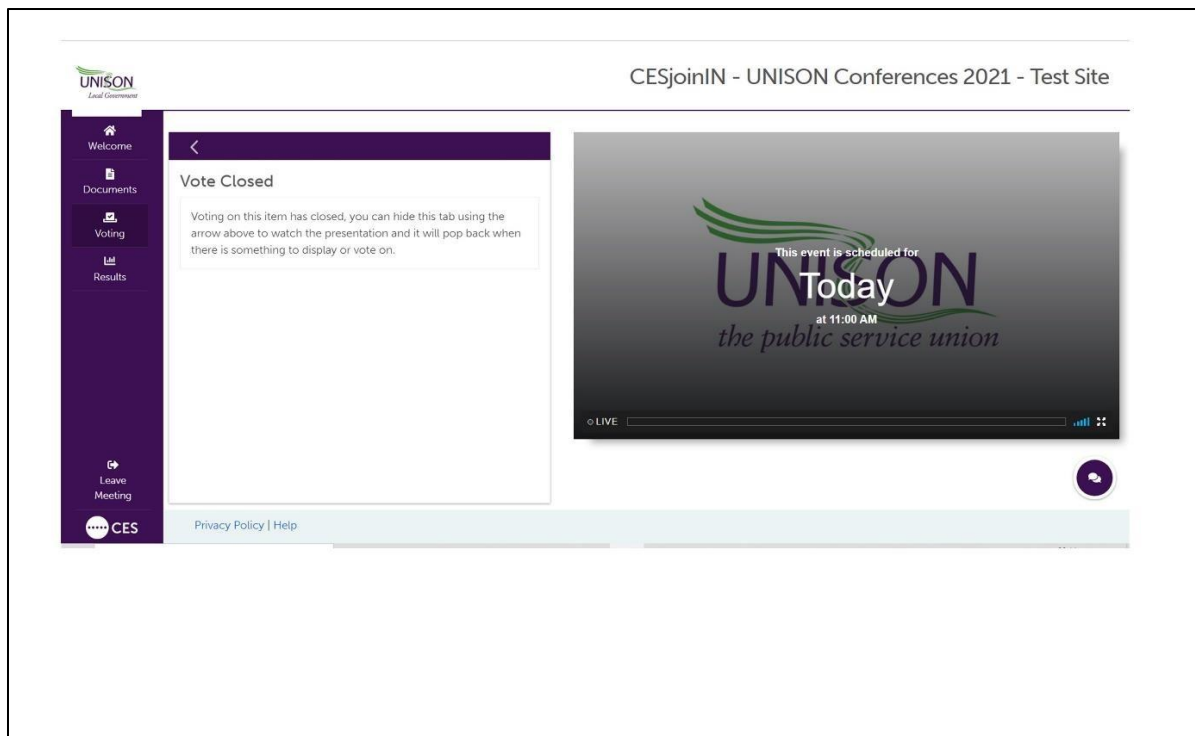
On the right-hand side of your screen (where the UNISON Logo is) is where the live stream of Conference will be. This screen will be active throughout all of the Conference sessions and will have an integrated BSL signer and subtitles for all Conference sessions. On the left-hand side of the page, you will see some “welcome text” about Conference and four tabs over to the left. The first one being “welcome” which is where you should be now.

Documents Page



The second tab on the left is the “documents” tab – here you will find links to any Conference specific documents, like the Conference guide and the Final Agenda – with all of the motions that will be debated at Conference.

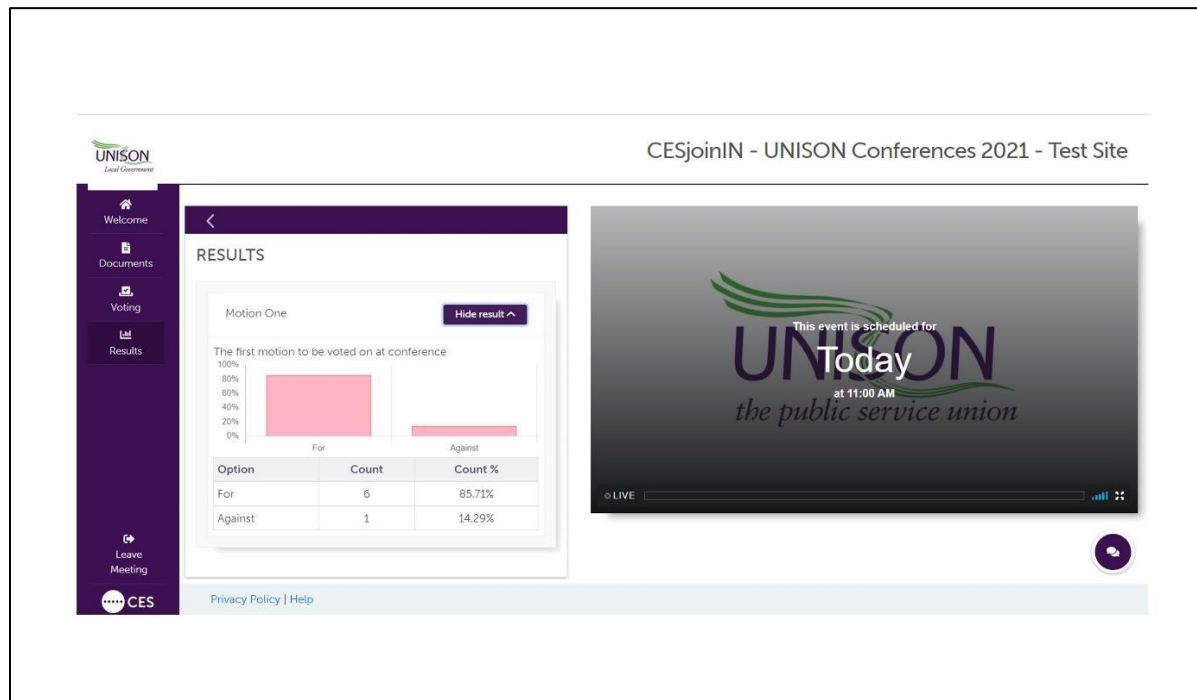
Voting Page



The third tab on the left will take you to the voting page. When a vote is called, this page will “pop out” and you will have the ability to vote on the motion being debated at that time. There will also be an alert on the top right-hand side of the page when the votes open and close.

You will be able to vote for or against for any motion and change your vote as many times as you like until the voting is closed.

Results Tab



Once the vote is closed, and the Chair reads out the result, you will be able to see the results of closed motions in the Results tab on the left – which is the fourth tab.

Trouble Shooting

If you have issues signing in – you can call the Conference desk on 0207 121 5123 or e-mail Conference@unison.co.uk.

If you want to speak

There will be debates on motions and amendments and delegates will be able to vote on them. But these debates will be slightly different to what you would expect at a physical Conference. Instead of being able to go up to a physical rostrum control during the Conference, speakers have been pre-registered ahead of the event

Raising a point of order

A delegate may raise a point of order if they wish to move a procedural motion. **The only procedural motion available at Virtual Higher Education Conference is that “the question be put”.**

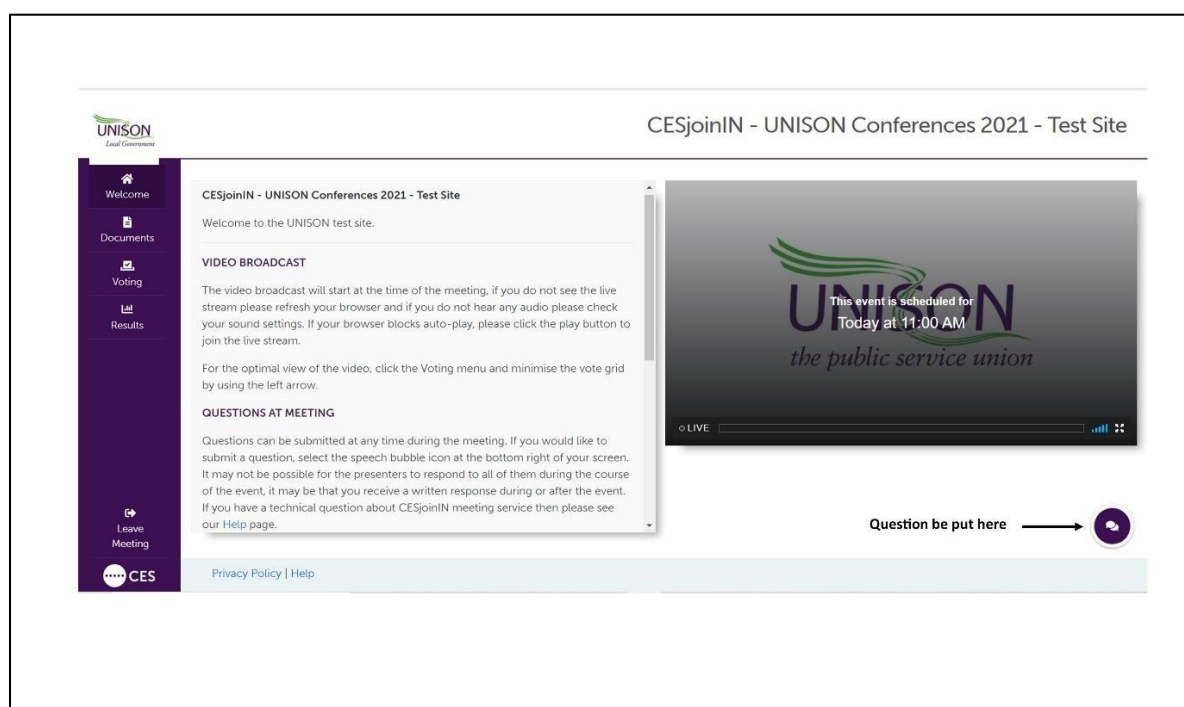
Only the President can interrupt a speaker. Delegates must raise a point of order after a speaker has finished. The point of order is raised with the President, not Conference.

The President will indicate when a point of order is about to be taken.

If you wish to raise a point of order, you must use the virtual platform to do so. At the bottom right-hand side of the page, you will see a small round icon – this is a link to rostrum control, who will in turn alert the President.

Please send a message with “Question be put” with your name and branch. This will alert rostrum control who will relay the message to the President.

Please see example below:



That the question be now put

If Conference votes in favour of the question being put, you move to a vote on the motion/amendment under debate. The right of reply may be taken if it has not been used already. In the case of the motion **that the question be now put**, the President may advise Conference not to accept the motion if they feel that the matter has not been sufficiently discussed.

Card Votes

All voting on motions and amendments at Conference will be “One Member, One Vote” in the first instance.

A card vote will be held if the results of the vote is tied.

This will be relayed to Conference by the President.

If the President calls a card vote – the same motion will be voted on again, but the system will use the voting strength of the branch to calculate the votes.

Each branch’s voting strength has been pre-loaded to the system and will divide the total of available votes equally across all registered delegates – for example – 100 branch votes across 4 delegates would equal 25 votes each.

If a delegate is not in attendance or does not vote – then their share of the branches voting strength will be lost.

The President will announce the opening and closing of each vote.

Filming, recording and photography at UNISON Conferences

UNISON’s Conferences are a key part of our democracy. Delegates are able to make their voices heard and to vote on the policies which will govern our union’s policy and campaigns.

As such, the union wants all our members to know about Conferences and how important our democratic systems are – UNISON believes this is an important part of being an open, democratic organisation. However, the privacy of our members is valued.

Virtual Conferences are filmed throughout on behalf of UNISON. This footage provides a vital record of Conference for internal use; and some footage may be used on our website to promote UNISON and our democratic processes.

Only the Platform speakers and speakers to motions will be recorded

2 Standing Orders Committee Final Report

Standing Orders Committee Final Report

Membership

The Standing Orders Committee (SOC) is responsible for the smooth running of conference. There are 12 members of the SOC and they are: Stephen Storey (Cymru Wales); Bill Hassan (East Midlands); Amanda Chernery- Howes (Eastern); Jason Dickson (Greater London); Jeanette Lloyd, Vice Chair (National SOC rep); Michele Barnes (North West); Neil Bellamy (Northern); Ellen Gibson (Scotland); Sue Tibbles (South East); Christian Scott, Chair (South West); Tracey Burrows (West Midlands); Frances Hanson (Yorkshire & Humberside)

Josie Irwin (National Women's Officer), Secretary, SOC
Mandy Roper (UNISON Centre), Administrator, SOC

The SOC has drawn up a timetable and order of business for debate of motions and amendments, and this is set out in Section 3.

If the mover of a motion or amendment is not present when their item of business is called, that motion or amendment falls.

Final Agenda

Tuesday 22nd February

Morning session: 9.30 – 12.30 15 minute break at 11.00
Afternoon session: 13.30 – 16.30 15 minute break at 3.00pm

Motions and amendments to be debated at the conference are included in Section 4 of this guide. Motions will be taken in the order they are listed.

Emergency motions

No emergency motions were received by the deadline.

Appeals

For this Virtual Higher Education Conference, the decision of the Standing Orders Committee was final on any appeal received. No further appeals are possible.

Procedures

The Virtual Higher Education Conference has been called under Rule D 3.1.4 by the National Executive Council. To facilitate the Conference as a virtual event, the

National Executive Council requested that some of the usual procedures for Conference were altered using Rule P 1.2.

The Standing Orders Committee report explains how the Conference will be conducted and the President will advise how to use the Virtual Conference system throughout the event.

Procedural motion – Question be put

Delegates wishing to move that the ‘question be put’ are advised to use the **‘Question be put’** function in the chat function on their screens.

Voting

Voting will be conducted via a virtual show of hands which will be definitive. In the event of a tie, card votes will be available to break the tie.

Independent lay member scrutineers

The voting system at this Virtual Higher Education Conference is automatic and transparent. However, two UNISON lay members will act as scrutineers to observe the running of the conference and ensure it is conducted fairly and transparently.

3 Conference timetable and order of business

Tuesday 22nd February

9.30 – 11.00	Opening Remarks by the Chair of Conference Higher Education Service Group Executive Annual Report 2022 Motions and Amendments Speaker - Assistant General Secretary (AGS) Jon Richards
11.00 - 11.15	Break
12.00 – 12.30	Motions and Amendments Speaker - Larissa Kennedy President of the National Union of Student and a student politician.
12.30 – 13.30	Lunch
13.30 – 15.00	Motions and amendments
15.00 – 15.15	Break
15.15 – 16.30	Motions and amendments
16.30	Finish

Motions will be taken in the order they are listed in Section 4.

4 Conference motions and amendments

These are the motions and amendments approved for the 2019 Higher Education Service Group Conference. Below is the order that they will be heard at Conference.

Motion No	Subject	Submitted by
1	Scottish Bargaining & Higher Education Pay	<i>Scotland Region</i>
2	Devolution Matters!	<i>Cymru/Wales Region</i>
3	Universities must take practical steps to support victims of domestic violence	<i>City University</i>
4	Higher Education Service Group Executive Pay Motion 2022/23	<i>Higher Education Service Group Executive</i>
4.1	Higher Education Service Group Executive Pay Motion 2022/23	<i>Liverpool John Moores University</i>
5.	Black Lives Matter – A higher education trade union programme of action	<i>Higher Education Service Group Executive</i>
6.	“Freedom of speech” in higher education	<i>National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender plus Committee Higher Education Service Group Executive</i>
7.	Crisis in Higher Education Industrial Action Balloting - A pay strategy that can and must win	<i>Northern Region/ Aberystwyth University</i>
8.	A New Approach to Pay Disputes	<i>Hull University</i>

8.1	A New Approach to Pay Disputes	<i>Higher Education Service Group Executive</i>
9.	A balloting strategy that works for our members!	<i>Cymru/Wales Region</i>
10.	Industrial Action Ballots 2022/23 onwards	<i>Anglia Ruskin University</i>
11.	Working for better pay and conditions in Students' Unions	<i>Leeds Beckett University</i>
12.	Tackling structural racism in higher education	<i>National Black Members' Committee</i>
13.	Greater Support for Frontline Workers	<i>Teesside University</i>
14.	Flexible working and hybrid working	<i>Higher Education Service Group Executive</i>
15.	Higher Education (HE) funding campaign	<i>Higher Education Service Group Executive</i>
16.	Health and Safety	<i>Higher Education Service Group Executive</i>
17.	Recognising the real impact of Covid and Lockdown on support staff	<i>Leeds University</i>
17.1	Recognising the real impact of Covid and Lockdown on support staff	<i>Liverpool John Moores University</i>
18.	Trans equality in higher education – louder and prouder!	<i>National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender plus Committee</i>
19.	Wholly Owned Subsidiaries	<i>West Midlands Region</i>
20.	Defending Higher Education Pensions	<i>Higher Education Service Group Executive</i>

21.	Promoting Transgender Equality in Higher Education Institutions	<i>Higher Education Service Group Executive</i>
22.	Covid Measures in Higher Education: Impact on Black Staff	<i>National Black Members' Committee</i>

Amendments Ruled Out of Order Could place the union in legal jeopardy

- (A) Higher Education Service Group Executive Pay Motion 2022/23 - *University of Brighton*

Negotiating and Bargaining

1. Scottish Bargaining & Higher Education Pay

For many, many years New Joint Negotiating Committee for Higher Education Staff (New JNCHES) has failed to deliver pay outcomes that improve or protect our members' living standards.

The employers' approach to this negotiating forum has not reflected a commitment to genuine negotiation or collective bargaining, and despite the best efforts of our negotiators, New JNCHES has presided over negligible progress on correcting the gender pay gap, the ethnic pay gap, implementation of the 35 hour working week and improving other key employment conditions.

The Scottish Higher Education Service Group is committed to working in solidarity with colleagues across the sector to break the impasse at New JNCHES, but cannot ignore the significant progress made in recent years by colleagues in Scottish Further Education (FE), National Health Service (NHS) Scotland, Scottish Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPBs) and Scottish local government.

All of these sectors carry out their pay bargaining at a Scottish level. In fact, HE is the only service group in Scotland that is still subject to a UK bargaining forum.

Conference notes that:

- 1) Bargaining outcomes in Scottish bargaining forums have consistently outstripped imposed 'settlements' at New JNCHES.
- 2) The Scottish Government's 'Fair Work Framework' and generally sympathetic attitude to trade unions creates a more conducive environment for genuinely negotiated bargaining outcomes.
- 3) The Scottish Higher Education Service Group has decided democratically that members at Scottish universities would be better served, long term, by Scottish bargaining.
- 4) That the campaign for Scottish bargaining would, if successful, be a years-long process, facing significant resistance along the way from the employers and Universities Scotland.
- 5) That Scottish branches will continue to play a strong part in any UK-wide campaigns, as they have done for many years.
- 6) That the devolution protocol provides a strong framework for the pursuit of Scottish bargaining in HE, without losing cohesion in our UK-wide pursuit of fair pay outcomes and progress on the gender pay gap, ethnic pay gap, 35 hour working week and secondary terms and conditions.
- 7) That progress towards Scottish bargaining in HE could raise helpful new pressures on New JNCHES, as Scottish employers seek to boost the credibility

of that forum and stave off devolved negotiations based on Scottish public-sector pay policy.

HE Conference calls on the Higher Education Service Group to:

- a) Support the Scottish Higher Education Service Group in its work to achieve a proper Scottish negotiating forum for bargaining on pay, conditions and action to end the gender and ethnic pay gaps;
- b) Work with Scottish colleagues, in line with the Devolution Protocol, to ensure work towards Scottish bargaining complements pressing UK-wide campaigns to achieve pay justice at New JNCHES;
- c) Ensure colleagues in Wales and Northern Ireland are afforded similar opportunities to explore devolved bargaining if this is democratically decided by their regional HE service groups.

Scotland Region

2. Devolution Matters!

Conference acknowledges that there are four nations within the United Kingdom (England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland), with each legislature having autonomy over Higher Education.

This has meant that our Higher Education (HE) committees in those nations are more often than not negotiating directly with relevant devolved governments on a range of issues such as more direct funding via funding councils, a different model of tuition fees or introducing laws that directly benefit our members.

Conference agrees that these devolved negotiations are highlighting what can be achieved when working with governments that are open to dialogue with Trade Unions. Our union as a whole should value and learn from what is being achieved in devolved nations, in contrast to the approach currently pursued by the Conservative UK Government.

Conference believes that devolution matters and voices in those devolved nations need to be heard by UNISON. It is a matter of deep concern that in the current Service Group Executive the majority of working groups are made wholly of English only representatives with voices from devolved nations not being heard.

We call upon the Service Group Executive to undertake the following:

- 1) Develop a process/procedure to ensure that devolved voices are heard and reflected when deciding on UK wide issues such as the New Joint Negotiating Committee for Higher Education Staff (new JNCHES) negotiations.
- 2) Review and Reaffirm their commitment to the Devolution Protocol, operating under the guidance of the NEC and best practice.

- 3) Highlight and contrast the work in the devolved nations that is taking UNISON's agenda forward in order to achieve our objectives across all of UNISON in Higher Education.

Cymru/Wales Region

3. Universities must take practical steps to support victims of domestic violence

Currently in the UK, almost one in three women will experience domestic abuse in their lifetime, while two women a week are murdered by a partner or ex-partner, usually after a sustained period of suffering abuse.

The vast majority of the victims and survivors of domestic abuse are women and children, and women are also considerably more likely to experience repeated and severe forms of violence, and sexual abuse.

The impact of domestic abuse is wide-ranging and will inevitably affect workers and their colleagues. It is important that it is not ignored in the workplace but understood as a serious, recognisable and preventable issue. Abuse can be psychological, financial and emotional, and includes controlling or coercive behaviour.

Conference notes that in January 2021, the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy published a report entitled Workplace support for victims of domestic abuse. Conference further notes the open letter from the Business Minister to employers that accompanied the report's publication that urged employers to 'consider what pragmatic new measures could be put in place in your workplace to support survivors of domestic abuse'.

Conference believes there is so much that Universities can do as employers, together with trade unions, to spot signs of domestic abuse and support their staff. Few Universities have a domestic violence policy and fewer have one that is adequate to provide the support needed by victims of domestic violence.

Conference resolves to instruct the Service Group Executive to:

Write to all branches to:

- 1) Encourage them to engage in negotiations with their employer on a domestic violence policy;
- 2) Circulate UNISON's model domestic violence policy;
- 3) Encourage them to request their employer join the free Employers Initiative on Domestic Abuse;
- 4) Make them aware of support from organisations such as Hestia for reps supporting members who are the victim of domestic violence;

- 5) Write to all Higher Education Institutions to ask what steps they have taken to meet the recommendations from the Workplace support for victims of domestic abuse report;
- 6) Write to Universities and Colleges Employers' Association (UCEA) to request that they encourage their members to engage with UNISON in agreeing domestic violence policies and join the free Employers Initiative on Domestic Abuse;
- 7) Collect and share examples of good practice;
- 8) Publicly call on Universities to adopt UNISON's model domestic violence policy and join the free Employers Initiative on Domestic Abuse.

City University

4. Higher Education Service Group Executive Pay Motion 2022/23

The past few years have been turbulent for everyone working in higher education due to the precariousness and uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and Britain's withdrawal from the European Union. The past couple of years have seen an unprecedented attack on higher education pay – with the national higher education employers not making a pay offer to their staff for the year 2020/21.

The pay offer for 2021/22 was 1.5% for the majority of staff. This offer neither met our pay claim nor gave any element of catch up. Additionally, the government's announced increase of 1.25% on national insurance payments, means that almost all of the pay offer has been taken up by this extra taxation. The increases in utilities bills, particularly gas and electricity, and the increase in food prices means that inflation is predicted to soon exceed 4%.

Over the past thirteen years higher education pay has fallen in real terms. Staff are working harder than ever, and the cost of living has risen, but pay hasn't kept up. The employers must urgently address pay injustice. Universities continue, on average, to pay their female staff less than their male counterparts despite equal pay legislation being in place for over 50 years, and reports show that Black staff earn less than their white counterparts.

In some universities staff work a 35-hour week and in others a 37-hour week – working 6% extra for no more money – another example of pay inequality within the Higher Education (HE) sector. A 35-hour working week should be the standard across the sector.

Low pay continues to be a problem in higher education – the lowest pay point, for staff working on a 36 or 37 hour contract, is below the foundation living wage rate of £9.50 per hour (outside London). University employers should ensure that everyone on campus earns a decent wage whether they work for a contractor or directly for the university.

University workers have done their utmost to keep universities running throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and continue to do so. They have adapted to working from home, or they continued coming into campus to support students and colleagues – putting others first. All staff deserve and need a real, meaningful pay rise in 2022/23 to make up for the years of below inflation pay rises and to keep up with the cost of living.

Now is finally the time for universities to make good – for them to give university employees a decent pay rise. The 2022/23 pay rise must address the lost earnings in the sector as well as ensuring that pay keeps up with the cost of living.

Conference calls on the Higher Education Service Group Executive to pursue joint union negotiations and to produce a joint claim that seeks to incorporate the following points:

- 1) Negotiate a consolidated pay award of a flat rate of £1,900 or 5% whichever is greater with a minimum of an above inflationary pay rise.
- 2) Establish a minimum bottom spine point of £10 per hour for a 37 hour week, and negotiate so that all universities are accredited Living Wage Foundation employers ensuring that all staff on campus receive at least the Living Wage rates.
- 3) Negotiate similar consolidated increase on London Weighting and all other allowances negotiated nationally. Work with branches to seek to negotiate a similar rise in all appropriate local allowances.
- 4) Negotiate a national agreement with the HE employers to oversee the introduction of a maximum 35 hour working week in all universities.
- 5) Establish a Scottish sub-committee of the New Joint Negotiating Committee for Higher Education Staff (JNCHES) as set out under the New JNCHES Agreement. The main purpose of the sub-committee would be to deal with matters not currently being dealt with at the New JNCHES Committee.
- 6) Negotiate on joint employer and union action to eliminate the gender and ethnic pay gap, work with regions, branches and sister trade unions to achieve these ends. To take an intersectional approach to achieving pay equality for all staff. Seek to work with employers, aiming for transparency and full sharing of data at both a national and local level.
- 7) Build a campaign for all universities to become accredited Foundation Living Wage employers reminding them of the moral and business case of why they should apply for Living Wage accreditation and demand that they do so.
- 8) Negotiate for a national agreement to reduce precarious employment in Higher Education seeking, as far as possible, for staff to be employed on permanent contracts. Negotiate for a national agreement to bring outsourced workers in higher education back into direct university employment.

- 9) In the event that the joint pay claim is not met by the employers, seek to escalate the pay campaign, with a clear plan, in conjunction with fellow Higher Education trade unions. This may include lawful industrial action to strengthen the campaign in accordance with UNISON rules relating to industrial action.

Higher Education Service Group Executive

4.1

Amendment to Motion 4. Higher Education Service Group Executive Pay Motion 2022/23

Amend Point 2) to say:

Establish a minimum bottom spine point of £12 per hour for a 37-hour week and negotiate so that all universities are accredited Living Wage Foundation employers ensuring that all staff on campus receive at least the Living Wage rates.

Liverpool John Moores University

Amendment to Motion 4. Higher Education Service Group Executive Pay Motion 2022/23

Insert

10) if the joint pay claim is not met in full by the employers for 2022/23, The HESGE is to explore the option of a multi-year pay deal for 23/24 with branches within the service group.

Liverpool John Moores University

5. Black Lives Matter – A higher education trade union programme of action

Conference, the international outrage following the death of George Floyd, saw the Black Lives Matter movement take centre stage. Having suffered years of marginalisation, entrenched barriers, structural and institutional racism – people across the world came together to say enough is enough.

The worldwide protest of predominantly young, multi-racial people, demanding justice, and an end to police brutality and racism, calling for society to deal with centuries of oppression of Black people.

The movement also challenged the injustice of racism within modern day society. For example, we know anyone can be infected with COVID-19, it is not however, affecting all communities in the same way as highlighted by the disproportionate number of deaths in the Black community.

Despite the lockdown, thousands of people campaigned for justice and an end to centuries of racism and differential treatment, not just at the hands of the police, but in all aspects of society.

In Britain, the movement also focused on Britain's imperial past – the lack of Black history being taught in schools and universities, and the fact that numerous statues and monuments celebrate the supposed achievements of invariably rich and powerful individuals, who benefited directly or indirectly from the slave trade, which was instrumental in the development of the British Empire that continues to impact on many Black people across the commonwealth.

Within many universities there is a familiar pattern of a disproportionate number of Black staff who are significantly over-represented in lower grade jobs and under-represented in higher grades. Black people working in lower paid, but essential jobs as highlighted by the pandemic, include cleaners, porters, caretakers, catering and security staff. Black workers should expect the same level of opportunity and progression within the higher education workplace.

Trade unionists should demand an end to all types of discrimination, because it is so often used to create false divisions when the interests of all working people should be the same.

The Equality and Human Rights Committee report into racial harassment in higher education (Tackling racial harassment: universities challenged) was published in October 2019. The report highlighted the extent of racial discrimination experienced by staff and students on campuses across the UK. Universities UK (UUK) convened an advisory group to publish new sector guidance on taking serious action to tackle this problem.

The ethnic pay gap in higher education has also highlight that Black staff earn significant less than their white counterparts. The sector needs to ensure that staff data is as accurate as possible so that this problem can be proactively addressed, with real, measurable, actions to be implemented and monitored by employers and trade unions.

The Black Lives Matter movement deserves the support of UNISON, and all higher education trade unions, to formulate demands on employers and campaign to achieve genuine racial justice within higher education.

Conference notes that Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) no longer collects and publishes staff data relating to support staff grades meaning that greater engagement is required at a local level to monitor staff demographics and progress in making sure that the workforce is representative and that Black staff have the opportunity to progress in their careers.

Conference calls on the Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Continue to engage in discussions with the Vice-Chancellors to implement practical measures (such as anonymised recruitment, fair recruitment advisors, dedicated time off from work/day release for up-skilling) to create genuine equality of opportunity at universities, specifically in relation to new appointments.
- 2) Explore and discuss how UNISON can work with the Vice-Chancellors to improve the quality of staff data in order to calculate and publish their ethnic pay gaps, and agree action plans to address and reduce pay disparity.
- 3) Circulate the new UUK guidance on tackling racial harassment to all branches and support them in working with universities to address the issue of racial harassment and discrimination to ensure it is no longer a feature of working life in universities.
- 4) Work with sister higher education unions to promote the inclusion of Black working class history in the higher education curriculum.
- 5) Maintain total opposition to organisations that incite racism and racial harassment from speaking on higher education campuses thus creating a hostile environment affecting Black staff and students.
- 6) Encourage branches to support Stand Up to Racism, Show Racism the Red Card and Black Lives Matter events across our branches and regions.
- 7) Provide support for, and empower, Black university workers to organise within UNISON and its self-organised group structures, promoting the idea that the trade union movement can bring the power of a united working class in confronting all forms of inequality and discrimination.
- 8) Signpost branches and regions to resources and how to provide training to all Branches on Challenging Racism in the Workplace to equip branch officers and reps with the skills and knowledge necessary to identify and tackle racism effectively.

Higher Education Service Group Executive

6. “Freedom of speech” in higher education

Conference notes that the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill 2021, currently going through the Westminster Parliament, proposes new laws that the government has said are needed to “safeguard” free speech and academic freedom in universities. The bill would mean higher education providers – and student unions – will have a duty to “actively promote” freedom of speech, including making venues available to groups or speakers regardless of beliefs.

Universities will be fined by the Office for Students if they fail to uphold legal responsibilities to free speech on campus and individuals will be able to seek compensation from higher education institutions and student unions which they believe have breached their legal duties to facilitate free speech. The Department for

Education has estimated the cost of the new legislation to universities and student unions as £48.1 million over the next decade.

Conference notes the Bill has been introduced following a number of ‘de-platforming’ incidents in recent years given a high profile in the media, and that some of these have related to debates around gender and speakers who are involved in campaigns to roll back the existing rights of trans people.

Conference further notes that Labour is opposing the Bill and moved an amendment at second reading in the House of Commons aimed at stopping the bill from progressing further, which stated “the bill is a hate speech protection bill which could provide legal protection and financial recompense to those seeking to engage in harmful and dangerous speech on university campuses, including Holocaust denial, racism and anti-vaccination messages.”

Conference is therefore concerned that this legislation may lead to an increase in hate speech and the expression of offensive, abusive, or discriminatory views in universities.

Conference recalls the motion “Transgender Equality in Higher Education Institutions” carried by our 2020 conference, which noted that there was strong evidence that workplace discrimination remained all too common in universities. The motion also supported the call from the Parliamentary Women and Equalities Committee Inquiry into Transgender Equality (2016) for all higher education institutions (HEIs) to take proactive steps to promote trans equality, including providing staff with gender identity training and a trans champions scheme.

Conference recognises that the many barriers to challenging discriminatory behaviour often stem from a lack of information, education, support and firm policies in workplaces, and that it is essential that there are workplace allies for all Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT+) identities. It welcomes the development of a new UNISON LGBT+ Allies training programme, aimed at giving non-LGBT+ members the opportunity to explore what it means to be an ally and to identify ways of creating an inclusive working environment for everyone.

Conference therefore calls on the Higher Education Service Group Executive, working in liaison with the national LGBT+ committee as appropriate, to:

- 1) Encourage the negotiation of inclusive language in higher education agreements and policies, and of inclusive practices and procedures, across our higher education workplaces
- 2) Urge all higher education branches to use the UNISON trans equality guide and model policy, along with the LGBT+ bargaining factsheets and guide to non-binary inclusion, to review employer policies and agreements with employers with a view to achieving best practice

- 3) Urge branches where employers have no trans equality policy to seek to negotiate the adoption of UNISON's model policy
- 4) Raise trans equality with employers and employer bodies and seek reviews of relevant equality guidance, in line with UNISON best practice
- 5) Continue to gather and publicise good practice examples from branches organising in the service group of inclusive employer policies and practices, including in record-keeping, language, any dress codes and in the provision of safe and accessible gender neutral facilities.
- 6) Promote the guide to being to be a good trans ally, and the new LGBT+ ally training programme, across the service group
- 7) Continue to promote the call from the Parliamentary Women and Equalities Committee Inquiry into Transgender Equality for all higher education institutions to take proactive steps to promote trans equality including providing all staff with gender identity training and a trans champions scheme.

National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender plus Committee

Efficient and Effective Union

7. Crisis in Higher Education Industrial Action Balloting – A Pay Strategy that can and must win

The Higher Education Sector has reached what appears to be a crisis point regarding balloting for strike action over pay.

Neither aggregate nor disaggregate balloting appears to be effective when considering the returns from industrial action ballots in Higher Education.

It is important to note that we failed to win ballots under an aggregated model, but conference also notes that, under the current disaggregated strategy, fewer than 10 branches were able to return a 50% turnout in recent ballots.

Higher Education in UNISON needs to seriously consider why our members are not engaging in ballots for industrial action on pay.

Reflecting on past union organised industrial action on pay, in 2018 UCU held a 14-day strike in 61 institutions followed by a bigger one in 2019/20. The 2019/2020 action lasted 22 days in 74 institutions. Unfortunately, this surge of activity did not result in any gains for HE workers.

Higher Education in UNISON needs to learn from this and our recent industrial action ballots on pay. It would appear there is a need to pause and take stock.

The recent move from Universities and Colleges Employers' Association (UCEA) to review New JNCHES (New Joint Negotiating Committee for Higher Education Staff), and the noises from members of the UCEA Board, make it apparent that the employers intend to press their advantage and attack central, national pay bargaining. We, alongside our sister HE trades unions, have the power to stop this but only if we maximise our strengths and minimise our weaknesses.

The unfair Trade Union Act of 2016 has resulted in a scramble to produce spreadsheets of confirmed/unconfirmed voters. However, a successful ballot, whether it be aggregate or disaggregate, does not always result in effective action. There is no gain in members striking if the majority of workers cross the picket line and continue to work or it is not for a cause that member's feel will be successful.

We need to build locally, members and activists on the ground need to be given resources and training to organise properly. We need to make our branches stronger by recruiting more members. Dispute after dispute will end in failure without the full buy in of Higher Education workers. There needs to be joint work nationally and regionally to succeed in empowering our members and recruiting new members

Conference calls on the SGE to:

- 1) Consider the resources needed to train activists in recruitment, campaigning, and leadership over issues such as pay and other local issues in Higher Education.
- 2) Research the issues that are a priority for Higher Education members, including what they would be prepared to take industrial action on and what motivates them or not to vote in industrial action ballots, in a member survey concentrating on these issues only.
- 3) Formulate a plan that will help HE members engage with the issues around pay so that they will be confident to vote in an industrial action ballot. If it is a disaggregate ballot, then for the SGE to make it clear to members what this means and what the plan will be for balloting.
- 4) Allow the SGE the freedom to discuss the most appropriate forms of balloting which will lead to the greatest success with the Industrial Action Committee based on UNISON's current rule book.
- 5) Formulate a plan to establish greater emphasis on recruiting in Higher Education both at national and regional level, with an emphasis on recruiting at branch level and being inclusive to all groups of staff.
- 6) Hold workshops and other activities to inform this review in the HE Branch Seminar with the aim of having a relentless focus on getting our strategy right, effective, and fit for purpose.

Northern Region/Aberystwyth University

8. A New Approach to Pay Disputes

Conference we believe that the current system of continuous indicative ballots and industrial action votes related to pay isn't working to ensure members get fair pay offers. After over a decade of below inflation pay offers in Higher Education, it's time for UNISON branches to try a new strategy to work alongside the annual cycle of discussions with Universities and Colleges Employers' Association (UCEA). The current system of bargaining and threatening industrial action on an annual basis whilst also dealing with the Trade Union Act makes it impossible to achieve the sort of pay offers our members deserve. We all know members are getting confused as to which offer is currently being disputed and what they are balloting and voting for, and this is leading to disengagement as indicated by low turnouts.

As such, we believe UNISON branches in Higher Education should launch a standalone dispute with UCEA, separate from the pay bargaining cycle, that focuses on improving pay citing how over the last decade members' pay has gone backwards and has the potential to continue to do so unless new and concerted action is taken.

Conference calls on the Higher Education Service Group Executive:

- 1) to explore the possibility of launching a standalone dispute with UCEA over a decade of poor pay offers that has seen members' pay decrease in real terms;
- 2) to consider the most suitable group/individuals to lobby/enter into dispute with, if it is not possible to enter into a dispute with UCEA;
- 3) to work with other campus unions (GMB, Unite, University and College Union (UCU) etc.) to see if they would work with us on a standalone campaign addressing a decade of poor pay offers;
- 4) to compile data on how members' pay has decreased in real terms over the past decade. Data could include how much the average member has lost in pounds and percentage compared to inflation. This data could support an awareness raising campaign which would allow members to see just how much they have lost in real terms. This data could empower members and galvanize them to act;
- 5) to work with branches to lobby Member of Parliament (MPs) to ensure that the issue of Higher Education staff pay is on their agenda.

Hull University

8.1

To delete and replace first part of bullet point 3 up to '(UCU) etc.)' with 'to work with other New JHNCHEs Trade Unions (UNISON, UCU, EIS, GMB and Unite)'

To delete and replace point 5 with 'to work with branches to lobby Members of Parliament, Members of the Scottish Parliament, Members of the Senedd, Members of Northern Ireland Assembly and to work with UNISON Labour Link to ensure the issue of Higher Education staff pay is on the agenda.'

Higher Education Service Group Executive

9. A balloting strategy that works for our members!

Conference notes that since the introduction of the Trade Union Act, our union and the Service Group Executive (SGE) have failed to adapt to the changing dynamics of the need to win 50% turnouts. We have seen successful ballot actions fail to reach the required threshold to undertake lawful industrial action and this has left behind a legacy of real terms pay cuts, pay freezes, and growing discontent. A key question is what we need to do this time to beat the 50% turnout threshold imposed by the law.

To improve our chances of meeting the 50% threshold required to take industrial action, our SGE took the decision to disaggregate balloting in the most recent round of pay consultation.

We believe that, while it is an understandable response to a frustrating problem imposed upon us by anti-union government forces, it leaves us in a vulnerable position, and presents a real risk to our bargaining position and potentially, the national pay framework.

For example, in a scenario where only a handful of branches achieve a 50% turnout, or where the results differ, the employers know each branch's position, and our collective strength is lost. How can a branch effect change for its members if they do not meet the threshold turnout for industrial action, or if the branch votes against, in a situation where if aggregated, the result would support such action? We do not believe it is fair to put our hard-working branch officials in this position. We will never have complete strength unless we are together as one, behind a common cause. Together we are stronger. Disunity quietens our members' voices; the unity of aggregated balloting makes our voices louder.

Conference believes that our current balloting strategy is not working and allows our employers to take advantage. Employers no longer see us as a united force, nullifying our bargaining positions and branch campaigns.

We acknowledge that we also failed to win ballots under an aggregated model, but conference notes that under the current strategy fewer than 10 branches were able to return a 50% turnout in recent ballots. It has not worked.

This conference believes that the status quo is unsustainable. If we are unable to hold employers fully to account, we weaken the strength of our members. We need to take the power back for our members and maximise the strength of this union.

Conference calls upon the Service Group Executive to do the following:

- 1) Suspend plans to hold disaggregated ballots aside from in exceptional circumstances, to be outlined by a full review.

Cymru/Wales Region

10. Industrial Action Ballots 2022/23 onwards

At the Higher Education Conference in February 2020, conference passed a motion on Industrial Action ballot tactics for the 2020-21 pay campaign.

The motion made a lot of sense in as much a better pay campaign strategy needs to be sought as members are not fully engaging in consultations over past pay offers, however the motion also called on the SGE to run disaggregated ballots for formal industrial action ballots with effect from the 2020-21 pay campaign.

This has now made every pay ballot for industrial action into a local dispute. When notice is served to the employer that a branch is in dispute over pay, their voting strength is given to the employer. Smaller branches in particular feel vulnerable in providing this information and therefore normally opt out of taking Industrial Action, even if their branch's pay consultation has achieved a turnout of over 50%.

Of the 174 Universities and Colleges Employer's Association (UCEA) member organisations, branches covering 48 institutions only opted into the ballot for Industrial Action over the 2020-21 pay freeze and were sent the postal ballot.

There is also concern that, whilst disaggregated balloting remains, Universities may try to opt out of National Pay Bargaining. Employers may choose to take the view that as balloting for industrial action on pay is now a local dispute, they can also handle pay negotiations as a local issue and come out of the Joint Negotiating Committee for Higher Education Staff (JNCHES). This could easily result in even worse pay offers for our members and the development of pay disparity across the sector.

Conference calls on the Higher Education Service Group Executive to:

- a) move formal industrial action ballot on pay to an aggregated basis with an aim to achieving 50% turnout to enable all members to take national action when called.
- b) compare and publish the outcomes of the pay industrial action ballots from 2017 – date.

Anglia Ruskin University

Campaigning

11. Working for better pay and conditions in Students' Unions

This Conference recognises that students' unions (sometimes known as associations or guilds) are communities of students who represent, promote and campaign for the interests of their members - the students. In higher education, they are typically independent not-for-profit organisations, constituted as charities, primarily funded through a 'block-grant' from their university or college and occasionally topped up through a variety of commercial activities.

Most students' unions are led by a team of elected student officers and some may also have a board of trustees containing members external to the organisation providing advice and promoting good governance. Often, the day-to-day work of students' unions is supported and delivered by a team of directly employed staff in both permanent and casual roles.

This Conference believes that UNISON branches in the Higher Education Service Group continue to be appropriate representative bodies for staff working in students' unions, however it is noted that representation does not exist universally across all students' unions.

This Conference notes that staff in students' unions regularly work within the same buildings, campuses, shared digital systems and on the same working groups and projects as university staff, often considering each other to be colleagues and yet many of our members in students' unions work with pay and conditions inferior to those of staff in comparable roles within their respective universities.

Conference further notes that despite there being over 600 students' unions in the UK, only c.24 are listed as accredited Living Wage employers on the Living Wage Foundation website.

This Conference calls upon the Higher Education Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Undertake a mapping exercise of UK students' unions, associations and guilds paying the real living wage; and
- 2) Work with branches and regions to lobby all UK students' unions, associations and guilds to become accredited Living Wage employers; and
- 3) Work with regions to support branches to build working relationships with their students' union, where a relationship has not yet been built, to encourage trade union recognition, membership and representation for staff; and
- 4) Campaign for the adoption of the national Higher Education pay spine and associated grading in all students' unions, to achieve pay parity between higher education providers and their students' unions; and

- 5) Lobby Higher Education providers to ensure that funding to their students' unions, via a 'block-grant' or otherwise, is sufficient to achieve the above aims as well as the delivery of their core work.

Leeds Beckett University UNISON

12. Tackling structural racism in higher education

In 2019, the Equality and Human Rights Commission launched an enquiry into racial harassment into public funded universities in Britain to examine staff and student's experiences of racial harassment and the effects they might have on their education careers and wellbeing. The report highlighted that racial harassment is a common occurrence for many students and staff in British universities. The effects are seriously damaging to individuals and our society. Black staff with huge potential are being left behind in professional development within universities.

Black staff are also excluded, marginalised, and face hostile comments and stereotyping. Unfortunately, this behaviour often goes unchallenged, which results in staff feeling pressured to leave their employment. 3 in 20 staff reported that racial harassment caused them to resign their positions.

Common experiences noted included subtle and nuanced acts, often known as micro aggressions, such as being ignored or excluded from conversations or staff gatherings and being exposed to racist material. There were examples of anti-Semitic and Islamophobic slurs against both staff and students. Sadly, many incidents formed part of a pattern of repeated harassment.

The report highlighted the need to change the culture of Universities. The findings stated that universities were more concerned about their reputations than addressing racism and discrimination and safeguarding the welfare of their own staff. As employers, universities should create and maintain environments where racial harassment towards staff or students is not tolerated, where race and racial inequality can be discussed confidently.

We ask the Higher Education Service Group Executive (HESGE) to address the gaps in race equality highlighted by the report and work with the National Black Member's Committee (NBMC) to

- 1) Explore ways of encouraging branches to engage with Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) by providing them with guidance and best practice advice on how to report and tackle racial harassment.
- 2) Work collectively with the NBMC to develop an action plan to ensure that HE employers commit to addressing the inequality of staff in the sector as a key feature of their post pandemic recovery plans.

- 3) Encourage HEIs to analyse their complaints data on a regular basis with their campus trade unions to ensure a robust system is in place for reporting incidences of racism and race-related complaints.
- 4) Increase awareness and understanding of diversity and equality across the service group.
- 5) Support the development of a good practice guide for activist and representatives in this sector.

National Black Members' Committee

13. Greater Support for Frontline Workers

Conference recognises the immense contribution our members working on campus have made throughout the coronavirus crisis. These members are often the lowest paid and had little choice but to return to campus even if they felt anxiety about doing so. While branches worked hard to ensure workplaces were as safe as possible and Risk Assessments fit for purpose, inevitably there was still risk and our frontline members faced it.

Predictably, the autumn term for 2020/21 saw a high number of coronavirus cases in universities, particularly in student accommodation. It was, and is, our members who are on the front line every day supporting students in their residences. Our members are the forgotten frontline workers; preparing and delivering food, keeping accommodation clean and safe, carefully handling gatherings of students and supporting students who have been ill, distressed or anxious and depressed.

Unfortunately these same staff who have worked tirelessly to support Universities throughout the pandemic are also least able to take advantage of HEI policies on more flexible working arrangements including Agile and Blended working policies.

Conference agrees that these staff need to be recognised, celebrated and rewarded. UNISON in Higher Education needs to campaign to promote the importance of our members' jobs and continue our work to ensure Professional Support Staff are recognised for the amazing work they do.

Higher Education Conference calls on Higher Education Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Research best and worst practice in HEI's for front facing Professional Support staff including; pay, rewards and working conditions.
- 2) Share the research data and provide support to branches to negotiate better conditions for these members.
- 3) Run a campaign promoting the diverse and important work our members in Higher Education do.

Teesside University

14. Flexible working and hybrid working

More than four in five workers in Britain want to work flexibly according to a Trade Union Congress (TUC) report on The future of flexible work published in June 2021.

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, there was inequality in access to genuinely flexible working. As the TUC report notes, “Too many people in working-class occupations were closed out of genuine flexibility and instead had worse terms and conditions masquerading as ‘flexibility’ forced onto them in the form of zero-hours contracts and other forms of insecurity.” In Higher Education (HE), many staff in lower paid jobs often have had requests for flexible working turned down on grounds that the ‘business needs’ of the institution cannot accommodate flexible working in their role.

The Covid-19 pandemic has significantly changed the landscape of flexible working. From March 2020 to July 2021, all those who could work from home were expected to do so. In HE, this meant that the majority of staff have worked from home. However, a significant number of staff, including cleaners, security, catering, technicians and portering staff, continued to work on campus.

For the 2021/22 academic year, many HE institutions and student unions are adopting hybrid working practices. In some cases, hybrid working - where staff can mix working from campus and from home - is being introduced on a trial basis and at others it is a permanent change. In general, hybrid working is being offered only to staff in desk-based roles. Cleaners, security, catering and other non-desk based roles are excluded.

Hybrid working and the increased ability to work flexibly is welcomed by conference. However, there is a danger that staff in lower paid jobs on campus will continue to be ‘locked out’ of flexible working. Conference should also have concerns over the type of hybrid working models being introduced and the danger they may pose to working conditions.

Conference believes there needs to be fair access to flexible working and that flexible working must be of benefit to all staff working at universities, helping them balance their work and home lives. Increased access to remote working must not come at the price of reductions to pay, increased intrusive remote surveillance, unsafe working environments, lack of access to union representatives, an increase in unpaid hours worked and draining, ‘always-on’ cultures. Nobody working in a university should be denied the chance to return to working on campus and be forced to work from home as the result of money saving office closures.

Conference resolves:

- 1) To campaign for all university staff, including outsourced staff, to have fair and equal access to flexible working;

- 2) To recirculate bargaining guides to branches: Covid-19 pandemic Bargaining over working from home with model policy and Bargaining on working hours. UNISON has produced these useful guides and model policy on working from home/ hybrid working and working hours.
- 3) To collect examples of best practice of flexible working generally and hybrid working specifically and share with all branches.
- 4) To negotiate with Universities and Colleges Employers' Association (UCEA) for agreed sector wide standards that include Health and Safety, provisions of equipment, and for this to be extended to and include outsourced workers.
- 5) To campaign on the right to disconnect from work and to have a genuine balance between work and personal/private lives.

Higher Education Service Group Executive

15. Higher Education (HE) funding campaign – Don't fail our future

The Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic which caused the lockdown from mid-March 2020 has had serious repercussions across the higher education sector. Prior to the pandemic, many universities in the UK were already facing serious financial situations with 47 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) having posted a deficit in July 2019. In July 2020 63 HEIs posted a deficit.

The problems of the Higher Education funding system have been highlighted by the pandemic. The reliance by UK universities on international students paying inflated fees to subsidise university research is one example of the ways in which the current funding system is not fit for purpose.

A report from the Institute for Fiscal Studies published in July 2020 forecast that “the university sector’s losses is highly uncertain: we estimate that long-run losses could come in anywhere between £3 billion and £19 billion, or between 7.5% and nearly half of the sector’s overall income in one year. Our central estimate of total long-run losses is £11 billion or more than a quarter of income in one year... with the biggest losses likely from falls in international student enrolments.”

A report from London Economics in May 2020 forecast up to 30,000 redundancies in the sector if the forecast reduction in UK and international students becomes a reality.

Conference notes that whilst UK undergraduate student numbers did not fall in the autumn term 2020, that international student numbers have declined and that this has a financial impact on the sector. Conference further notes that university funding has been affected by reduction in other income streams including conferences and events, catering and bars, and student accommodation.

Conference notes that the government has still not published its response to the Augar report on Post 18 Education and Funding in England and that the sector is still waiting for a higher education white paper. The government said in January 2021, in its interim response to the 2019 Augar review of post-18 education, that it planned “to consult on further reforms to the higher education system in spring 2021” before setting out its full response at the spending review. This consultation, and proposed reforms, have been repeatedly delayed. UNISON is concerned by recent rumours ahead of the autumn spending review, that tuition fees may be cut and/or graduates could pay more and for longer with changes to the student loan arrangements (e.g. with a reduction in the salary threshold to start paying and increasing the payment period to 40 years).

Conference notes that any changes to the higher education funding system in England would have implications for higher education funding in the devolved nations.

Conference notes that in 2020 UNISON launched the ‘Don’t fail our future’ campaign for sustainable funding for higher education across the UK.

Conference notes that successful higher education underpins the delivery of many public services including health, social work, education, housing and many more areas.

Conference notes that many universities have taken steps to save money and that these measures have a direct and negative impact on university support staff.

Conference therefore calls on the Higher Education Service Group Executive (HESGE) to:

- 1) Continue to promote the ‘Don’t fail our future’ funding campaign for higher education;
- 2) Campaign to ensure that universities are well funded from general taxation to provide excellent higher education in our world class universities;
- 3) Continue to promote the case for free tuition for all, with maintenance grants and measures to support participation for all students, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds;
- 4) Work with UNISON at all levels and across the services groups, as appropriate, to build support for UNISON’s campaign for higher education funding;
- 5) Ensure that the campaign recognises the different funding models in the devolved nations;
- 6) Publicise the campaign on all HE social media platforms and encourage branch engagement. Work with Labour Link with a view to increasing support for the campaign from the Labour Party.

- 7) Scrutinise and encourage engagement in the government's response to the Augar report when they are published.

Higher Education Service Group Executive

16. Health and Safety

Latest figures from the Office for National Statistics show that, tragically, as at September 2021 almost 160,000 people across the UK have died in circumstances involving Covid-19 since the start of the pandemic. Statistics also show that low paid, black and disabled workers have been at particular risk and that this is heavily influenced by ingrained institutional prejudices across the entire UK economy.

Most distressingly, as the UK has experienced several waves of infections, the measures that have been proven to work for controlling the virus have often been applied inconsistently or less than effectively by many employers. Often conflicting and confusing legislation and guidance from the different UK governments has further complicated this and led to uneven levels of compliance with both legislation and locally determined measures for controlling the virus. Trade unions have had to repeatedly force both government and individual employers to take action every time cases spike. We will need to be ready again in the face of possible new variants of the virus or in case the immunity provided by vaccination starts to wane.

We know what works to control the virus at work – reducing contacts, maintaining distance, good ventilation with as much fresh air as possible, as well as clear rules mandating face coverings indoors. Despite the end of many specific legal restrictions across the UK, Higher Education Institutions (like all employers) have continuing responsibilities to manage and control the risks from coronavirus, as they do with all other hazards. The principles of risk assessment, applying the most effective control measures of eliminating or substituting the hazard first, must be properly applied to the risks presented by the virus in the Higher Education sector.

The vital role union safety representatives play in reducing the risks to workers has never been more apparent, or more in need. A general study conducted by the TUC in 2016 demonstrated that union safety representatives reduce injuries, encourage the reporting of accidents and near misses and reduce the overall levels of ill-health in the workplace. These are all vital in controlling the risks from coronavirus. More broadly unions have also helped to reduce the spread of coronavirus where they are established by campaigning and often striking for better sick pay provision, which in turn reduces the need for workers to attend work while unwell.

All of the above makes it absolutely vital that the lessons of the pandemic until this point are not forgotten, and that measures to control the virus continue where necessary.

To support this, conference calls upon the service group executive to:

- 1) Work with branches to demand all universities consult with the trade unions on both COVID-19 risk assessments as well as the inclusion of it in other risk assessments, making sure they are reviewed, implemented and equality proofed.
- 2) Support branches in continuing to push for individual risk assessments for those at higher risk from the virus, as well as the continuation of control measures to protect the most vulnerable.
- 3) Promote UNISON's National 'Be on the Safe Side' campaign, support branches in recruiting more safety representatives, and in ensuring they can get adequate time, facilities and information to properly conduct their role. Remind reps and their branches that safety reps have wide-ranging legal entitlements including to take part in risk assessments, facility time, to carry out inspections and much more.
- 4) Pressure employer bodies and government for action on the underlying equality issues lying behind the adverse impact of COVID-19 on low paid, black and disabled workers, as well as supporting branches to do the same in respect of individual employers.
- 5) Work with and support branches in lobbying universities to support members affected by long COVID. Push for sickness absence related to COVID/vaccinations to be disregarded in sickness absence procedures.
- 6) To support branches in calling for universities to provide paid time off for staff to have their vaccinations in line with the national agreement, as well as other absences related to medical treatment and caring responsibilities.
- 7) Provide clear advice to branches on the steps they can take if the situation worsens, including how to protect those who refuse to work in conditions that pose a serious and imminent danger to both staff and students. Circulate the nationally agreed health and safety escalation template.
- 8) Pressure governments to provide the highest possible level of support for universities to assist them in controlling the virus amongst staff, students and visitors, including:
 - a) Providing funding for Universities to cover the cost of additional measures e.g. CO2 meters, PPE, cleaning supplies;
 - b) Providing access and support for the latest and most accurate tests for all, particularly when calling on Universities to regularly test their students;
 - c) Providing targeted information and support for those who may be vaccine hesitant and easy access to covid vaccinations for students and staff on campus;
 - d) Issuing clearer and non-contradictory guidance to the University sector about the control measures they can implement in consultation with safety representatives based on best practice;
 - e) Clarify that a requirement to wear face masks in high-risk areas (e.g. crowded spaces and spaces where staff and students are in confined spaces for

significant periods of time) is a suitable measure to include in institutional and local risk assessments.

- 9) Work with other trade unions and the NUS on all of these measures to safeguard both staff and students.

Higher Education Service Group Executive

17. Recognising the real impact of Covid and Lockdown on support staff

The work done by members in the last 18 months has been simply phenomenal; or if you prefer, “unprecedented”. Members at all grades have gone that extra mile to essentially keep the Higher Education (HE) sector alive: whether that be staff in security, residential services, cleaning, estates who have stayed on campus, meaning that they have effectively been working on the front line; or the administrative and support staff who have borne the massive burden of moving just about everything a university does and putting it on-line – this involved huge effort, imagination, skill and sometimes endurance.

We did all of this for a zero percent pay rise. Following 12 years of below inflation pay settlements.

Next year’s miserly ‘offer’ has already been swallowed up by the National Insurance increase – which in effect is making workers pay for their own efforts to keep the economy running – before we get started on the cost of living increases, the terrifying fuel bill increases and the cut to Universal Credit which is nothing less than spiteful.

The workers of this sector need, they deserve, a full accounting of all that has been given in their service to HEIs (Higher Education Institutes) over the last 18 months. This must include a looking at the toll on the physical and mental health. Therefore, we call upon conference to require the Service Group Executive (SGE) to use all means at their disposal to investigate:

- 1) The real, and increasing, costs to staff of working from home – heating, lighting, network upgrades, equipment etc.
- 2) The amount of overtime worked, including, if possible, the hidden hours done by staff not taking lunch breaks, continuing to answer emails into the evening, or on days off.
- 3) Issues around caring responsibilities / home schooling / flexible working.
- 4) Sickness absence rates – any increases in sickness absence, especially Mental Health, anxiety and stress.
- 5) Increased instances of grievances, for reasons such as bullying.

- 6) Health and Safety reports / concerns relating to Covid safety; concerns relating to returning to / re-opening of campuses.

And then, armed with this information, to energetically and in a joined-up manner, lobby the sector employers for fair reparation.

They could not have done it without us.

Leeds University

17.1

Amendment to Motion 17. Recognising the real impact of Covid and Lockdown on support staff

Insert

- 7) Promote the Hub of Hope Database of Mental Health Resources across the Service Group.

Liverpool John Moores University

18. Trans equality in higher education – louder and prouder!

The toxic debate ignited by the United Kingdom government's consultation on reforming the Gender Recognition Act underlined the importance of our union, including branches in the Higher Education Service Group, supporting and representing our trans members effectively

Attacks on trans people escalated further in 2021. Groups trying to roll back the rights of trans people have encouraged supporters to lobby public bodies to replace 'gender' in their equality policies with 'sex' and claim that some have agreed to do so.

There has been a sustained attack on Stonewall's trans inclusive Diversity Champions programme, which many universities are members of. The programme gives advice, support and resources to employers on meeting their statutory requirements under the Equality Act 2010 and provides support and tools for organisations to improve their practice beyond the legal minimum. There have been repeated false claims that Stonewall is misinterpreting the Equality Act's protected characteristic of gender reassignment in its advice to organisations. Stonewall's advice is based on the Equality and Human Rights Commission's Equality Act Code of Practice, which was reaffirmed by the High Court in May when it threw out an attempt by one of the co-founders of the anti-trans LGB Alliance to launch a judicial review against the EHRC's guidance.

These attacks are being coordinated to undermine support for Stonewall's work on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT+) equality at work.

The tactics being used by those campaigning to roll back the existing rights of trans people, including 'gender critical' and anti-trans groups, are almost identical to the tactics seen around the time of Section 28, when gay men were portrayed as sexual predators and a danger to children to spread fear and mistrust.

Conference recognises that recent years have seen a concerted international campaign against trans people, and there is growing evidence of this being linked to the far right.

Conference notes that:

- a) The Southern Poverty Law Centre in the United States (US) reported that in 2017, at an annual right-wing, fundamentalist event called the Values Voter Summit, transphobia was discussed as a tactic to be deployed, because rallying against homosexuals was not working any more. One of the far-right panellists said: "Trans and gender identity are a tough sell, so focus on gender identity to divide and conquer...trans activists need the gay rights movement to help legitimise them...If you separate the T from the alphabet soup, we'll have more success".
- b) The International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation's study on the evolution of extremism in the first 100 days of the Biden Administration found that "Transphobia has long been one of the most major and ubiquitous narratives around which the far right mobilises... Transphobia should be recognised as a security concern".
- c) Some anti-trans individuals and groups in the UK have links with far right and alt right religious groups in the US and elsewhere.
- d) Targeting a minority, and spreading false information to provoke hatred and distrust by preying on people's fears, are classic far right recruitment tactics.

UNISON's position is clear: trans women are women, trans men are men and non-binary identities are valid. Conference recognises, however, that UNISON must now become more visible and more vocal in promoting Trans equality inside and outside the union.

Conference therefore calls on the Higher Education Service Group Executive to work with the National LGBT+ Committee and other parts of the union as appropriate to:

- a) Explore ways to increase the strength and visibility of UNISON's work to promote Trans equality in universities;
- b) Encourage higher education branches, working with student unions where possible, to urge employers to join the Stonewall Diversity Champions programme if they are not already members;
- c) Promote UNISON Trans ally training widely within the service group;

- d) Produce and promote materials to help members in higher education to counter the gender critical narrative and provide information on the links between the gender critical movement in the UK and the far right.

National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender plus Committee

Organising and Recruitment

19. Wholly Owned Subsidiaries

“Conference notes the now well-established practice of Universities utilising various spin-off companies, single purpose vehicles and wholly owned subsidiary companies (WHOs) for a variety of different purposes, including cost saving measures. For example, a University may use a nominally separate company for some of its activity on a small scale to exploit intellectual property, on a slightly larger scale to generate profit from commercial activities, or in the most troubling cases to take over the employment of all support staff.

Conference notes with alarm the increasing tendency for these companies to be used in ways that worsen pay, terms and conditions (T&Cs), slash pensions and attack collective bargaining rights.

In particular, conference notes the following tactics employed by one or more Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the process of creating these companies:

- i) Using a company to evade legal obligations to enrol staff in a decent defined benefit pension scheme, often resulting in reductions in value and increased costs for members;
- ii) Using a company to extend the activity of the institution into commercial areas not covered by its core charter and then to “gift aid” the profits back to the parent institution;
- iii) Using a company to specifically employ staff on “market” levels of pay and T&Cs for professions such as catering, housekeeping and cleaning where the private sector is well known for poorer pay and working practices.

Conference affirms its opposition to these practices and makes it clear that, regardless of protestations to the contrary by HEIs, it considers this to be outsourcing and one of the biggest threats facing all those who care about good employment in the Higher Education sector.

Conference calls on the Higher Education Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Conduct a scoping exercise to establish how broadly these practices are being used across the sector, as well classifying the different “types” of wholly owned subsidiary company being used by HEIs;

- 2) Develop a comprehensive guidance document for branches on this topic, covering:
- a) The relevance of legislation such as TUPE and the related requirements for consultation and information;
 - b) Key strategies that have been successful elsewhere in securing vital protections or even stopping these plans altogether;
 - c) Specific guidance about how particular types of situation (including those only affecting new starters) relate to UNISON industrial action guidance, and how to approach initial negotiations and ongoing campaigns in a way that maximises leverage, to prevent usage of such companies and/or protect members interests who are moved out of Universities into them.
 - d) Specific guidance dealing with strategies for continuing recognition agreements or defending/regaining recognition if Universities refuse to continue existing recognition agreements for new companies.
- 3) Design and deliver training for HEI activists which incorporates topics such as legal rights to information and consultation, points and methods of challenge, legalities of transferring staff and new starters, changes to contracts of employment, maintaining collective bargaining rights (national/local) and protecting pensions. This would also include organising and campaigning strategies to prevent WHOs and protect against detrimental changes to pay and terms and conditions of service.
- 4) Convene a specific group of activists with a stake in this matter, from Universities affected by this, as well as those who are concerned about its potential use at their employers in the near future, with a view to developing the above support mechanisms and discussing other ways UNISON can offer support to branches and representation for affected members.”

West Midlands Region

20. Defending Higher Education Pensions

Conference condemns the ongoing attack on our defined benefit (DB) pension schemes. Pensions are deferred pay and any cut to our pension schemes is a direct attack on terms and conditions.

Conference notes the variety in pension schemes in the Higher Education section. Multi-institution, large scale schemes such as Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS), Teachers Pension Scheme (TPS), Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) and the Superannuation Arrangements of the University of London (SAUL) pension schemes exist alongside far smaller self-administered trust (SAT) schemes at individual universities.

Conferences notes that the variety of pension schemes is reflected in the variety of attacks on decent defined benefit pensions for members. There are currently detrimental changes proposed for USS, as well as proposals to reduce benefits for new joiners at SAUL. Many self-administered trust defined benefit schemes are now closed to new joiners or future accrual with inferior defined contribution schemes having taken their place. An increasing number of post-1992 universities are established wholly owned subsidiary companies as a way of avoiding paying for their lowest paid employees to enter into a decent defined benefits pension scheme.

Conference believes that despite the variety of schemes, the attacks are all part of a concerted effort to cut pension benefits for workers in Higher Education. We need to act to protect all of our members in Higher Education. Conference believes the way to have greatest success is by responding to these attacks as whole, linking local pensions disputes to national disputes, and fostering networks to allow cross branch and cross region support.

Conference believes that access to a decent defined benefit (DB) pension scheme is of the highest priority for our union and that Universities that are removing or amending these schemes are not acting in the best interests of staff or the long term interests of the universities.

Conference therefore calls upon the Service Group Executive to:

- 1) Survey all universities to understand what pension schemes are in place and identify where local attacks on pensions have taken place, are in progress or are threatened.
- 2) Develop an organising strategy and guidance that can be sent to branches to help argue and organise against any changes.
- 3) Develop a framework that will allow branches and regions to communicate, work together and support each other in organise against any changes.
- 4) Work with UNISON's Industrial Action Committee and Legal Office to explore creative ways disputes can be lodged within the law, where there might be barriers to the normal process.
- 5) Work with UNISON Pensions unit to develop factsheets to help our members understand how our pensions work and why it is essential we retain access to decent pension schemes. This should include the need for member involvement with any campaign and can't be driven by a branch committee alone.
- 6) Work with UNISON Labour Link to campaign for manifesto commitment from the Labour Party to support Defined Benefit pension schemes in Higher Education.

Higher Education Service Group Executive

21. Promoting Transgender Equality in Higher Education Institutions

Conference will recall carrying the motion ‘Trans inclusion in higher education workplaces’ in 2017 welcoming trans members’ active participation in UNISON and accepting that trans equality must be addressed in all workplaces. This motion also endorsed the recommendations of the Parliamentary Women and Equalities Committee Inquiry into Transgender Equality, which called for higher education institutions (HEIs) to take proactive steps to promote trans equality, including gender identity awareness training, for all university staff.

Despite these positive steps forward, strong evidence still suggests that workplace discrimination remains all too common with a 2018 Stonewall report detailing incidents of gender identity-based verbal and even physical abuse in British universities.

Conference commends higher education institutions that have provided gender identity awareness training for their staff and those that have taken proactive steps to promote trans equality by, for example, having a Transgender Champions scheme for their non-trans staff. One such training is The Stonewall Diversity Champions programme, which addresses the marginalisation some trans and gender diverse people are vulnerable to, which can lead to heightened risks of self-harm and depression, particularly in circumstances where identity denial robs them of a safe environment. Inclusive policies - which recognise trans people, their gender identities, names, and pronouns - have a measurably positive impact upon their wellbeing. Unfortunately, in some places these policies are now under serious attack. An example of this is anti-trans lobby groups applying pressure to HE institutions to pull out of Stonewall’s Diversity champion programme because of its comprehensive trans inclusion. Conference notes that UNISON HE branches should resist any such attack and campaign to make sure their institution does not bow to this pressure.

Trans-inclusive policies in HE have also been subjected to further attacks and accusations that intimidating atmospheres, not in line with academic freedom, have been created by trans-inclusivity. A strong message needs to be sent that respect for gender identities is a duty of care that cannot “be considered antithetical to academic freedom.” Academic freedom is not a licence to deny someone’s human dignity, just as free speech is not a defence for discrimination.

Conference notes there are still many workplace policies and procedures to be reviewed for unnecessary gendering and urges all branches and equality reps to ensure their institution’s Equality, Diversity and Inclusion units are tasked with making them as gender neutral as possible. Whilst some students’ unions have already developed their own good practice on trans inclusion and creating safe spaces, UNISON is calling for policies and procedures relating to both the students union workforces and the university workforces to be reviewed.

Conference recommends UNISON's bargaining factsheet on trans workers equality and the separate UNISON guidance for reps supporting trans members, both of which are regularly updated. These are helpful for any higher education workplace reps who don't feel confident addressing transphobia or supporting trans members.

Conference calls on the Higher Education Service Group executive to:

- 1) Promote UNISON's trans workers' rights guidance, urging branches, allied with students' unions where helpful, to insist that workplace policies and procedures are gender neutral where unnecessary gendering has been used. The types of policies that should be monitored include: bullying and harassment; transition at work guidance; family and leave policies.
- 2) Remind branches to use the UNISON guide for reps and the activist resources available in UNISON's regional LGBT+ groups and national trans network, to increase awareness and confidence addressing trans equality and gender identity issues;
- 3) Encourage branches to resist anti-trans groups attempts to push for institutions to pull out of Stonewalls Diversity Champion programme;
- 4) Liaise with UNISON's National LGBT+ Committee to seek out further actions that can be taken to support members and Branches in their ongoing work to keep HEI's trans-inclusive and safe environments for trans members.

Higher Education Service Group Executive

22. Covid Measures in Higher Education: Impact on Black Staff

Conference notes that government guidance issued on 17th August 2021 lifted "restrictions on the approach to teaching and learning in higher education (HE) providers as a result of COVID-19. There is no requirement for social distancing or other measures within in person teaching."

The lack of clear Covid-19 precautionary measures comes at a time when transmission risks for universities are as high as last year at this point across the UK. In Scotland, cases are doubling weekly. We know that the more cases that occur, the more likely it is that the highly transmissible Delta Variant will further mutate and could impact on the vaccine roll-out.

The Covid-19 pandemic clearly exposed social and health inequalities, for example the impact on people who are more socially deprived and particularly on Black communities. Public health England's report, 'Disparities in the risk and outcomes of Covid-19' stated "People from Black ethnic groups were most likely to be diagnosed. Death rates from COVID-19 were highest among people of Black and Asian ethnic groups". If measures to protect people from the virus are removed from universities, how will staff, including the disproportionately affected Black staff, be able to protect themselves?

The recent HE reports by the Independent Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) have advised on the benefits of remote learning, particularly that 'remote learning has enabled positive change for some particularly regarding work-life balance and child care; accessibility for disabled staff and students; participation and inclusivity in teaching, learning and meetings; and reduced carbon footprints from travel connected to core university activities.'

Crucially, "students have a clear desire to continue using the aspects of remote learning that they found useful."

Conference notes Independent SAGE recommendations:

- 1) Universities should focus on providing excellent quality remote learning rather than on opening campuses that are likely to close again
- 2) If students have to attend campus, a Covid-safe university should be secured through:
 - a) Testing on or before arrival on campus followed up by further regular testing of students and staff
 - b) Mitigations in classrooms including masks, social distancing of two meters as the norm and regular cleaning
 - c) Residential bubbles
 - d) A social agreement of Covid-safe behaviours on campus. This should cover students, teachers and all university support staff
 - e) Full consultation with University staff, rigorous health and safety procedures and attention to equality and diversity issues

Conference is calling on the Higher Education Service Group Executive to:

- i) Work collectively with the National Black Members Committee (NBMC) to develop an action plan and implement a survey of UNISON HE staff to collate their views on the Covid-19 measures and post pandemic recovery plans.
- ii) Review any additional Covid-19 guidance for HE universities and put in place proposals for improvement.
- iii) Refer Black UNISON HE staff to UNISON's 'Risk assessments for Black, disabled and other vulnerable workers'.
- iv) Contribute to UNISON's recruitment drive in HE institutions to increase participation of Black members, including encouraging Black members to consider Health and Safety roles within their workplaces.

National Black Members' Committee

AMENDMENTS RULED OUT OF ORDER

Could place the union in legal jeopardy

Motion 4 Higher Education Service Group Executive Pay Motion 2022/23

Point 9), replace “In the event that the joint pay claim is not met by the employers...”, with “In the event that by the date of this conference, it appears that the employers will be unwilling to move sufficiently close to our claim...”, and continue point 9.

Then, add the following:

Escalation of the pay campaign has to be based on the principle that moving quickly and organising for a serious campaign in the spring of 2021, represents our best opportunity to achieve a successful outcome for our members.

Conference therefore calls on the Service Group Executive to carry out the following as quickly as possible:

1. At the close of this conference, declare a dispute with the employers on the basis that an acceptable offer is not going to be made without a clear threat of industrial action.
2. Immediately consult all members over the most recent offer.
3. On the basis of a successful consultation outcome, ballot members in all branches during March, inviting other higher education trade unions to do the same.
4. Indicate to the employers that we will seek to organise national strike action during April/May if they do not move closer to our claim by making a serious and meaningful pay offer.

University of Brighton

5 UNISON Rules and Standing Orders

RULE D - SERVICE GROUP CONFERENCE

(See page 16 of UNISON Rules)

- 3.4.1. Each Service Group shall hold a Conference annually, for a period not exceeding three days.
- 3.4.2. The policies of a Service Group shall be determined by the Group's Conference.
- 3.4.3. Arrangements for the Conference shall be made by the Group's Executive in accordance with the Standing Orders.
- 3.4.4. Each Service Group shall have a Standing Orders Committee comprising either a panel of members of the Standing Orders Committee of the National Delegate Conference or two representatives from and nominated by the members of the Standing Orders Committee of the National Delegate Conference, together with representatives from the Service Group.
- 3.4.5. Delegates to the Conference shall be elected annually in accordance with a scheme to be drawn up by the Group's Executive and approved by the Group Conference.
- 3.4.6. The following members shall have the right to attend the Conference and to speak, but not to vote:
 - 1 All members of the Group's Executive (subject, in the case of the members who are also members of the Standing Orders Committee, to the rules of that committee).
 - 2 The General Secretary, Associate General Secretaries, Deputy General Secretaries, head of group and such other staff as the National Executive Council, General Secretary, Group Executive or head of group may determine.
 - 3 One representative from each professional and sectional body.
 - 4 The chairperson of the Group's Standing Orders Committee.
 - 5. Two representatives of each Service Group Regional Committee.

- 6 Two representatives (being members of branches in the relevant Service Group) of each Self-Organised Group at national level.
7. Two representatives (being members of branches in the relevant Service Group) of the National Young Members' Forum.
- 3.4.7 The Group's Standing Orders Committee shall be present at the Conference but, except as provided for, shall take no part in the Conference proceedings.
- 3.4.8 In accordance with the rules of procedure each branch represented within the Service Group may submit motions and amendments to the Group's National Conference or any special conferences.
- 3.4.9 Each regional Higher Education Service Group Committees shall be entitled to send one delegate each to the conference. Regional Higher Education Committees will be entitled to submit motions to the Higher Education Conference.
- 3.4.10 Each Self-Organised Group at the national level may submit a total of two motions and two amendments to the Group's National Conference.
- 3.4.11 The National Young Members' Forum may submit up to two motions and two amendments to the Group's National Conference.
- 3.4.12 A special service group conference shall be convened on receipt, by the head of the service group, within any two month period, of requisitions to that effect, stating the business to be transacted, from branches representing not less than 25% of the service group membership.

RULE P - STANDING ORDERS FOR CONFERENCES

(See pages 54-59 of UNISON Rules) NB. These rules have been amended to refer to service group conferences only.

1. APPLICATION OF STANDING ORDERS

- 1.1 These Standing Orders shall apply to all meetings of the Service Group Conferences held under Rule D.3.4.
- 1.2 In the case of a Service Group Conference, the appropriate Standing Orders Committee shall have power (but is not required) to decide at the request of the Service Group Executive that it is

necessary that certain Standing Orders shall not be applicable to the Conference.

- 1.3 In addition to branches acting under Rule D.3.4.8 the Service Group Executive, Service Group Regional Committee, Sector Committees and self organised groups at the National level (who may each submit a total of two motions to the Conference) may propose motions and amendments to the Conference.

2. STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE

- 2.1 The members of the Standing Orders Committee shall hold office from the end of one Conference until the end of the next Conference.
- 2.2 At its first meeting after it takes office, the Committee shall elect a Chairperson and a Deputy Chairperson from amongst its members.
- 2.3 The functions of the Committee shall, subject to these Standing Orders, be to:
 - 2.3.1 Ensure that the Union's Rules and Standing Orders relating to the business of Conferences are observed, and notify the Chairperson of any violation that may be brought to the Committee's notice.
 - 2.3.2 Draw up the preliminary agenda and final agenda of Conference business, and the proposed hours of business, to be circulated in accordance with the timetable stated in Rule D.1.9. i.e.
 1. Submissions of motions: 16 weeks
 2. Publication of preliminary agenda: 13 weeks
 3. Submission of amendments: 8 Weeks
 4. Publication of final agenda: 4 weeks
 - 2.3.3 determine the order in which the business of Conference shall be conducted, subject to the approval of Conference
 - 2.3.4 consider all motions and amendments submitted for consideration by Conference and, for the purpose of enabling Conference to transact its business effectively the Committee shall:

1. decide whether such motions and amendments have been submitted in accordance with the Rules
 2. group together motions and amendments relating to the same subject, decide the order in which they should be considered and whether they should be debated and voted on separately or debated together and voted on sequentially
 3. prepare and revise, in consultation with the movers of motions and amendments, composite motions in terms which in the opinion of the Committee best express the subject of such motions and amendments
 4. refer to another representative body within the Union a motion or amendment which in the opinion of the Committee should properly be considered there; the mover shall be informed of the reason for so doing
 5. have power to do all such other things as may be necessary to give effect to these Standing Orders.
- 2.4 Any decisions of the Committee which are to be reported to Conference shall be announced by the Chairperson of the Committee and shall be subject to ratification by Conference.

3. MOTIONS AND AMENDMENTS - PRE CONFERENCE PROCEDURE

- 3.1 Motions, amendments and other appropriate business may be proposed for the conference by the bodies set out in Rules D.1.10.3 and D.1.10.4.
- 3.2 Motions and amendments shall be sent to the National Secretary in order that the Standing Orders Committee may consider them for inclusion in the preliminary agenda.
- 3.3 The date and time by which motions and amendments to be considered for the Conference shall be received by the National Secretary shall be stated in the timetable to be published under rule D.1.9.

4-7 CONDUCT OF CONFERENCES

- 4.1 The Service Group Conference shall meet in public session, except that by direction of the Service Group Executive or by resolution of the Conference the whole or any part of Conference may be held in private. In addition to the elected delegates and those who under Rule D.3.4.6 have the right to attend and speak at Conference, the

only persons permitted to attend a private session of a Conference shall be

4.1.1. such members of the staff as have been authorised by the Service Group Executive or the Head of Group to attend Conference

4.1.2 such other persons as the Chairperson may determine.

4.2 The agenda for the Service Group Conference shall be arranged so that the first session of the Conference shall be in public, subject to Rule 4.1 above.

5. Apart from the elected delegates and those persons who have the right to speak at the Service Group Conference under Rule D.3. 4.
6. no other person shall speak except by permission of the Standing Orders Committee.

6. Any questions of procedure or order raised during a Conference shall be decided by the Chairperson whose ruling shall be final and binding.

7.1 Upon the Chairperson rising during a Conference session, any person then addressing Conference shall resume her/his seat and no other person shall rise to speak until the Chairperson authorises proceedings to continue.

7.2 The Chairperson may call attention to continued irrelevance, tedious repetition, unbecoming language, or any breach of order on the part of a member and may direct such a member to discontinue his or her speech.

7.3 The Chairperson shall have power to call any person to order who is causing a disturbance in any session of Conference and if that person refuses to obey the Chairperson, she/he shall be named by the Chairperson, shall forthwith leave the Conference Hall, and shall take no further part in the proceedings of that Conference.

8. VOTING

8.1 The method of voting shall be by a show of hands of the delegates present, unless a card vote is called by the Chairperson or immediately after the result of the show of hands has been declared by at least 10 per cent of the delegates registered at the Conference.

8.2 On a card vote, the delegate or delegates of a branch or group of branches shall be entitled to cast a total number of votes in accordance with the card issued to them in respect of their branch

membership and such votes will be cast as a single block or may be divided in line with a branch mandate.

- 8.3 In the event of a card vote being called or demanded, the card vote shall be taken immediately after it has been demanded, but no business shall be suspended pending the declaration of the result of the vote except that which in the Chairperson's opinion may be directly affected by that result.

9. TELLERS

- 9.1 Conference shall appoint delegates to act as tellers for the duration of the Conference.

10. WITHDRAWALS OF MOTIONS AND AMENDMENTS

- 10.1 A motion or amendment which is shown on the final agenda may not be withdrawn without the consent of the Standing Orders Committee, whose decision shall be reported to Conference.

11. MOTIONS AND AMENDMENTS NOT ON AGENDA

- 11.1 A motion or amendment which is not shown on the final agenda may not be considered by Conference without the prior approval of the Standing Orders Committee and the consent of Conference, which shall be governed by the following rules:
- 11.2 Such motion or amendment shall be in writing, signed by the Secretary and Chairperson of the branch or branches on whose behalf it is submitted and shall be sent to the Standing Orders Committee at least five working days before the commencement of Conference, except if it relates to events which take place thereafter. It will state at which meeting it was debated and adopted.
- 11.3 If the Standing Orders Committee gives its approval to the motion or amendment being considered, copies of the motion or amendment shall be made available for delegates at least one hour before Conference is asked to decide whether to consent to the matter being considered.
- 11.4 An emergency motion will not be given priority over other motions and amendments on the agenda except where the Standing Orders Committee decide that the purpose of the motion in question would be frustrated if it were not dealt with at an earlier session of the Conference.

12. PROCEDURAL MOTIONS

The following procedural motions may be moved at any time without previous notice on the agenda:

- 12.1 That the question be now put, provided that:
 - 1. the Chairperson may advise Conference not to accept this motion if in her/his opinion the matter has not been sufficiently discussed
 - 2. if the motion is carried, it shall take effect at once subject only to any right of reply under these Standing Orders.
- 12.2 That the Conference proceed to the next business
- 12.3 That the debate be adjourned
- 12.4 That the Conference (or any part thereof) be held in private session provided that:
- 12.5 A motion under Rules P12.1, P12.2 and P12.3 shall be immediately put to the vote without discussion and no amendment shall be allowed
- 12.6 The Chairperson may at her/his discretion permit a motion under Rule P12.4 to be discussed and amendments moved.
- 12.7 No motion under Rules P12.2 or P12.3 shall be moved by a person who has spoken on the motion or amendment in question.

13. AMENDMENTS TO A MOTION

- 13.1 When an amendment to a motion is moved, no further amendment may be moved until the first one is disposed of, subject to Rule P.16.
- 13.2 When an amendment is defeated, a further amendment may be moved to the original motion.
- 13.3 When an amendment to a motion is carried, the motion, as so amended, shall become the substantive motion, to which a further amendment may be moved.
- 13.4 A delegate shall not move more than one amendment to any one motion, nor shall the mover of a motion move any amendment to such motion.

14. LIMIT OF SPEECHES

- 14.1 The mover of a motion or an amendment shall not be allowed to speak for more than five minutes and each succeeding speaker for not more than three minutes, except where the Standing Orders Committee have decided otherwise.
- 14.2 No person shall speak more than once on a question, except that the mover of the original motion may exercise a right of reply for not more than three minutes, introducing no new material.

15. POINTS OF ORDER

- 15.1 A delegate may at any stage in a Conference raise a point of order if she/he considers that the business is not being conducted in accordance with the Union's Rules and Standing Orders.
- 15.2 Such a point of order must be raised as soon as the alleged breach occurs or at the earliest practicable moment thereafter.
- 15.3 The Chairperson's ruling on the point of order is final.

16. GROUPED DEBATES AND SEQUENTIAL VOTING

- 16.1 Where, in the view of the Standing Orders Committee, separate debates on specified motions and/or amendments dealing with the same subject matter would lead to undue repetition in the debates, a grouped debate and/or sequential voting may be adopted by Conference.
- 16.2 The following procedure will be followed:
 - 1. The Chairperson will advise Conference of the order of business and of the sequence in which motions and amendments will be moved and voted on following a general debate, and of the effect of certain proposals on others.
 - 2. All motions and amendments included in the debate shall be moved.
 - 3. The general debate shall take place.
 - 4. The Chairperson shall again state the order of voting and shall advise Conference which, if any, motions or amendments will fall if others are carried.

5. Voting will take place on motions, preceded by relevant amendments, in the order in which they were moved.
6. A debate being conducted under this procedure may not be adjourned until after all the motions and amendments have been moved.

17. REPORTS BY SERVICE GROUP EXECUTIVE

- 17.1 After the opening of Conference the Service Group Executive shall present its report for the past year.
- 17.2 If the Service Group Executive presents a report to Conference which contains proposals or recommendations requiring approval and adoption by Conference, the Executive shall submit it under a motion seeking such approval and adoption.

18. REFERENCE OF OUTSTANDING ITEMS TO THE SERVICE GROUP EXECUTIVE

- 18.1 If at the end of the Service Group Conference, the business of the Conference has not been concluded, all motions and amendments then outstanding shall stand referred to the Service Group Executive. The Service Group Executive in turn shall then report back to the appropriate branch or body its decision on these matters. All such motions and amendments shall be responded to at least one month before the deadline for submission of motions and amendments to the following year's Conference.

19. SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

- 19.1 Any one or more of these Standing Orders maybe suspended by a resolution of Conference in relation to a specific item of business properly before that Conference and to the proceedings thereon at that Conference, provided that at least two-thirds of the delegates present and voting shall vote for the resolution, or in the case of a card vote at least two-thirds of the votes cast are for the resolution.

6 Glossary of Terms

Acronyms used in higher education

ACAS	Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service
Advance HE	Advance HE brings together the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU), the Higher Education Academy (HEA), and Leadership Foundation for Higher Education. Their role is to support universities in putting strategy into practice for the benefit of students, staff and society.
AMSU	Association for Managers in Student Unions now merged with the NUS
APF	Affiliated Political Fund – this fund is used to promote UNISON’s political objectives via political affiliations
AUA	Association of University Administrators
BUFDG	British Universities Finance Directors Group - the representative body for finance office staff in the higher education sector in the United Kingdom.
DfE	Department for Education
DDA	Disability Discrimination Act
DBIS (BIS)	Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
EHRC	Equality and Human Rights Commission
ELQ	Equivalent or Lower Level Qualification
Framework Agreement	The Framework Agreement for the Modernisation of Higher Education Pay Structures: This is the 2004 pay agreement that unifies pay arrangements across the higher education sector. It addresses concerns about equal pay, and introduced job evaluation to ensure fairness and transparency in the way staff are rewarded. It involves the creation of a single national pay spine and a common grading system for all staff groups.
GPF	General Political Fund – this fund is used to promote UNISON’s political objectives. No money from this fund is paid to any political party it is used for campaigning purposes.

GuildHE	GuildHE is one of the formal representative bodies for Higher Education in the UK. It was founded in 1967 as the Standing Conference of Principals, registered as a company in 1992 and became GuildHE in 2006. It represents 50 organisations that have a tradition of learning and research in industries and professions.
HEaTED	Higher Education and Technicians Education and Development
HEFCW	Higher Education Funding Council for Wales
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HEIDI plus/ JiSC	Higher Education Information Database for Institutions
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency
HSE	Health and Safety Executive
HEOPs	Higher Education Occupational Physicians/Practitioners
HESH	The Higher Education Safety and Health Forum. Membership is drawn from the Universities and Colleges Employers Association (UCEA), the Trade Unions, and HSE
HERA	Higher Education Role Analysis (an HE specific job evaluation scheme).
UKCISA	UK Council for International and Student Affairs
New JNCHES	Joint Negotiating Committee for Higher Education Staff. In 2001, the Universities and Colleges Employer Association (UCEA), and higher education unions replaced ten negotiating bodies with this single national body. The New JNCHES agreement was signed in 2013.
LGBT+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender plus
LLUK	Lifelong Learning UK
MillionPlus	MillionPlus is one of the formal HE representative. It represents 22 universities – primarily post-1992 HEIs.
MSD	Musculoskeletal Disorders
NUS	National Union of Students

OfS	Office for Students is the independent regulator of higher education in England. This body also distributes government funding to English universities.
RRA(A)	Race Relations Amendment Act
Russell Group	The Russell Group represents 24 UK 'pre 1992' universities which are focused on maintaining the best research and outstanding teaching.
SFC	Scottish Funding Council distributes government funding to Scottish universities.
TUC	Trades Union Congress
UCEA	Universities and Colleges Employers Association – which represents the employers' side on national negotiating committees.
UCU	The UCU is the University and Colleges Union. It represents academics and some senior support staff in higher education.
Universities UK	Universities UK has 140 member institutions, representing higher education across all four nations.

7 Monitoring for Fair Representation and Proportionality

All delegates will be asked to complete an online form which enables the conference to be monitored in order that UNISON can check on progress towards its objectives of fair representation and proportionality at all levels of the union. This exercise is conducted at all UNISON conferences and at regional level.

Please assist us by completing the on-line form before the end of conference.

The form is available at:-

<https://survey.alchemer.eu/s3/90401366/UNISON-Fair-Representation-Form-National-Higher-Education-Conference-2022>



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